

and to protect the peace-loving people of the world actually has meaning.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK).

Ms. KILPATRICK. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Lee amendment and as a cosponsor of the amendment. The amendment asks what the American people want. They want us to work through the United Nations, work through that process, and I want to report and you all know the United Nations has said yes, we will work with you, we will go in, we will have unfettered inspections and we will work and come back. It is not an "if" kind of situation, it is an "is." And the "is" is that the American people want the United Nations involved and they want the inspections to go forward and at a date determined to come back and report. Our CIA, our intelligence agency, has reported to this Congress and this Nation that there is no imminent threat that Saddam Hussein will attack America. He does not have the capability. Let the U.N. process work, and that is what the Lee amendment asks.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR).

(Mr. OBERSTAR asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, our Constitution entrusts to Congress alone the power to declare war, a power we should invoke with great care on evidence of a clear and present danger to our country.

President Bush has asked Congress to cede that power to him to be wielded against Iraq at a time of his choosing, with or without United Nations support, in a unilateral, preemptive strike of his own determination of the level of threat Iraq poses to our national security.

I will not surrender our constitutional authority. I will not vote for the committee resolution which confers upon the President fast-track war-making power. The President should first win U.N. Security Council approval of a new, more rigorous round of arms inspections in Iraq.

If Iraq resists the international inspectors and the mandated inspections fail, the President should then obtain a Security Council authorization of force, as was done in 1990, following which he should ask Congress for approval to wage war against Iraq. The resolution offered by the gentlewoman from California respects the Constitution and the American people and will give renewed diplomacy a chance.

The Committee Resolution grants the President a new foreign policy and national security tool that charts us on a fundamental departure from historic U.S. foreign policy toward a dangerous precedent of first strike military authority for future Presidents. Once established, this resolution has enormous global consequences and will set the standard for other nations to attack preemptively, without restraint.

This policy is contrary to our entire national tradition. The United States did not pursue a policy of first strike military authority against the Soviet Union during the Cold War when the Soviets had nuclear weapons directed at U.S. cities and military targets. Nor did the United States strike first against Iraq in 1990–1991.

For most U.S. citizens, the real threat to the nation is our deteriorating domestic security: unemployment, the loss of retirement income, access to affordable prescription drugs, and corporate misfeasance and malfeasance that are eroding workers' retirement and health care security.

Our domestic economy is in serious decline. Congress and the President should, as our top priority, mobilize investments in infrastructure and job training to put the unemployed back to work. We have to mount new strategies to counter unfairly-traded imports that undermine our national security through loss of jobs and income.

Earlier this year, the President made important recommendations in this Section 201 Steel Remedy plan. Since then, however, he has backtracked, granting numerous exemptions to allow significant subsidized steel imports to pour into our nation undermining our domestic steel and iron ore industries. These are essential national security issues.

Our national security begins with domestic security, expressed in a living wage, job security, livable communities, investments in education, health care, and transportation that will ensure a better future for our nation.

The Administration's obsession with Iraq has deflected our national energies from the need to shore up domestic security. We must not allow the pursuit of terrorists at home and abroad, nor vigilance over the threat from Iraq divert our attention from critically urgent domestic priorities.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. HONDA).

Mr. HONDA. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Lee amendment. In effect, the Lee amendment says that if there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, we must work to seek and destroy these weapons with our allies in the United Nations.

The amendment further indicates that we will not provide our stamp of approval for a unilateral, preemptive strike unless the administration can verify an imminent threat to our Nation.

Why should we change our national policy from being defenders of freedom and democracy to that of first-strike aggressors?

This amendment does not prevent the President from performing his constitutional duties. He is still the commander in chief of this great Nation. However, it is our constitutional duty to declare war. We must not delegate our authority to declare war to the executive branch.

Support the Lee amendment.

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, with due respect to the authority of this amendment and the preceding speakers, I really believe that adopting this amendment would be worse for America than taking no action at all. Adopting this amendment would sanction and legitimize the shameful gamesmanship that Saddam Hussein has shown for 11 years. Saddam views diplomacy without force as his personal game without rules.

We cannot, we dare not ignore his history.

Remember, the world builds an Oil for Food program and Saddam Hussein turns it into a way to rebuild his military and to amass personal wealth. The world builds a no-fly zone to protect innocents from Iraqi aggression. Yet Iraqi forces have fired on coalition planes hundreds of times this year alone.

The world demands and Saddam agrees to destroy his biological and chemical weapons. Yet every objective observer says he still has them and he is building more.

The world demands and Iraq agrees to bring in international weapons inspectors, but when they arrive, they are told that thousands of buildings are off limits. They are delayed, they are hassled until they go home in frustration.

Finally, Saddam declares with a smile that he does not support terrorism. Yet every day, including today, we learn more and more about the training, the resources, the protection that Saddam gives al Qaeda and others.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment, with its ambiguous references to negotiation and resumption of weapons inspections, would continue that game. In fact, it would have this House legitimize that game.

The gentlewoman from California speaks of the dangers of war, and she is right. War is very dangerous. But the last 11 years have shown that giving Saddam Hussein diplomatic cover to build weaponry, terrible weaponry, is even more dangerous.

There is a middle path: diplomacy with teeth. It is the underlying resolution that I support. Let us show that we have learned our lessons. As many have said here today and yesterday, and will say later today, the American people are watching what we do. So is the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you, so is Saddam Hussein. Let us show Saddam Hussein that the games are over. They will go on no more.

Let us vote against and reject the Lee amendment.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we should support the Lee amendment by giving unfettered, unconditional support for U.N. inspections for disarmament.